

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9251

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERSSALEM

UNCLAS USUN 3791

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR,UNGA, XF

SUBJ: SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S PRESS CONFERENCE -
MIDDLE EAST

1. IN PRE-UNGA PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 16, SYG WALDHEIM INCLUDED IN OPENING STATEMENT BRIEF REMARKS ON MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID NEGOTIATING PROCESS HAD TO BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON "THIS COMPLEX PROBLEM" AND THAT HE INTENDED TO USE PRESENCE AT UNGA OF MANY LEADERS CONCERNED TO CONTINUE HIS CONSULTATIONS. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGH HE HAD RETAINED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE TWO SIDES SUFFICIENTLY TO REMAIN MIDDLE-MAN, WALDHEIM SAID: "WELL, THAT IS MY IMPRESSION. OF COURSE, I AM FULLY AWARE THAT IN THE VERY DELICATE SITUATION WE ARE IN RIGHT NOW, WE CANNOT EXPECT THE RESUMPTION OF FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. WHAT I AM TRYING FOR IS AN INFORMAL PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PARTIES CONCERNED, WHICH I BEGAN A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND IN THIS WAY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE FORMAL PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS,

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WHATEVER FORM THEY MAY FINALLY TAKE."

2. WALDHEIM ALSO REFERRED IN OPENING STATEMENT TO "TRAGIC CONFLICT IN LEBANON" AND SAID NONE COULD FAIL TO BE MOVED BY "MASSIVE HUMAN TRAGEDY" AND BY "FERVENT WISH FOR EARLIEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION."

3. FOLLOWING IS Q AND A EXCHANGE ON LEBANON:

Q - SIR, ONE TIME YOU PROPOSED THAT THE UNITED NATIONS TAKE ACTION IN THE CRISIS IN LEBANON, TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT SETTLING IT. DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HAS A ROLE? AS YOU KNOW, THE UNITED NATIONS NEVER DID GET ENGAGED THERE.

A - OF COURSE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE APPEALS I HAVE MADE IN THE PAST AND OF MY LETTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF THAT IMPORTANT BODY TO THE GRAVE SITUATION IN LEBANON. ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU KNOW ALSO THAT ARTICLE 52 OF THE CHARTER CLEARLY SAYS THAT REGIONAL EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS DEALS WITH MATTERS OF THAT KIND.

AS YOU KNOW, THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES HAS TAKEN SUCH AN INITIATIVE -- SOME TIME AGO -- AND IS STILL VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A CEASE-FIRE AND TO START THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE I THINK WHAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DO FROM OUR SIDE HAS BEEN DONE, BUT, IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT EFFORTS BY THE COMPETENT REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, I THINK THAT WE CANNOT GO BEYOND WHAT WE HAVE DONE ALREADY. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I FOLLOW CLOSELY THREE EFFORTS, AND WE STAND READY WHENEVER NECESSARY TO HELP IN FINDING A SOLUTION.

Q - THE UNITED NATIONS HAS MORE THAN ONCE PRAISED THE SYRIAN EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE LEBANESE CRISIS. CAN THIS BE TAKEN TO IMPLY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS FAVORS THE SYRIAN MILITARY EXISTENCE IN LEBANON?

A - AS I TOLD YOU, THE UNITED NATIONS IS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS. I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE UNCLASSIFIED

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REASONS FOR THIS AND I CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT THE COMPETENT REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, WHICH IS THE ARAB LEAGUE, SHOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS AND FINALLY ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

LET ME ALSO SAY THAT WE ARE JUST A FEW DAYS AWAY FROM THE ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE BY THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, MR. SARKIS. I THINK THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT WHICH

WE SHOULD ALSO KEEP IN MIND.
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